

**FUTURE OF THE MONTANA  
COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT  
SYSTEM (MONTCAS)**

**RESULTS OF A STATEWIDE SURVEY**

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# WHY WestEd?

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- WestEd is a nationally recognized independent R&D organization
- Leader in standards, assessment, and accountability development and evaluation in over half of the states
- Selection of WestEd via bid solicitation process
- Project Director (Dr. Rabinowitz) long time advisor to OPI on assessment issues and member of assessment Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

# SURVEY PROCESS

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- Discussions with OPI: Purpose, Process, Content and Format
- Focus groups of Montana educators and constituents
- WestEd drafts survey based on OPI and focus groups input
- Review by assessment TAC
- Review by OPI/BPE Assessment Task Force
- Review by OPI internal team
- Final survey prepared to launch
- Survey Window: September 15-30 (on line, paper copies on request)

# SURVEY STRUCTURE

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- On-line administration
- Section 1: Demographics
- Section 2: Feedback on current and future directions of CRT and CRT-alt
- Section 3: Feedback on current state of practice on formative assessment and future directions
- Most questions on 5 point scale:  
Low (1) to High (5)

# RESULTS: DEMOGRAPHICS

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- 1,575 respondents
- 52 counties
- Community Size: 32% City, 31% Small Town, 13% Rural
- Size of Education System: 34% < 400 Students
- Type of Education System: 85% K-12
- Primary Role: 71% K-12 Teacher
- Number of Years in Primary Role: Average = 14

# RESULTS: DEMOGRAPHICS

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- Primary School Level: spread across elementary, middle, and high school
- Majority Race of student population: 90% white, 11% American Indian/Alaskan Native (some marked more than one category)
- Special Student Populations: largest spread across gifted, ELL, SWD, economically disadvantaged

# RESULTS: CRT PROGRAM

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- Familiarity with CRT Program: 3.7 (out of 5)
- Nature of experience with CRT: Test administration (61%), Use of reports (61%), Use released items (47%)
- Range of familiarity with specific components of CRT program: Average ranges from 2.5 – 3.9

# RESULTS: CRT PROGRAM

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- NO strong consensus for additions to CRT Program
  - Art: 2.0 (out of 5)
  - Critical Thinking: 3.5
  - Music: 2.1
  - Social Studies: 3.2
  - Indian Ed for all: 2.2
  - Direct Writing: 3.2



# RESULTS: CRT PROGRAM

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- NO strong consensus to move the grade 10 assessment to other grades
  - Grade 9: 2.1 (out of 5)
  - Grade 11: 3.1
  - Grade 12: 2.3
  - Split between Grades 10 and 11: 2.6

# RESULTS: CRT PROGRAM

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- NO strong consensus for computer (on-line administration: 3.0 (out of 5))
- NO strong consensus to add performance assessments
  - Portfolios: 2.4
  - Projects: 2.4
  - Labs: 2.4

# RESULTS: CRT PROGRAM

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- Preference for CRT to be administered later in the school year (3.7)
- Preference for results to be reported earlier in the school year (4.0)
- Note: Difficult to achieve both preferences simultaneously

# RESULTS: CRT PROGRAM

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- CRT Overall Satisfaction
  - Moderate satisfaction  
modal response = 3 (41%); Average = 2.4)
- CRT-ALT
  - Significant less familiarity than CRT (54% not familiar, Average = 2.1)
  - No strong preference to modify (Average Satisfaction = 2.5)

# RESULTS: FORMATIVE

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- Most report formative assessment practices in district they work (71%)
- Teachers (90%) and Administrators (88%) most likely participants; Learning Teams: 42%
- Most common assessment practices:  
Interim/Benchmark (30%); Instructionally imbedded (30%)
- Most common Professional Development practices:  
None found to occur overall on a regular basis  
(Averages range from 2.4 to 2.8 out of 5)

# RESULTS: FORMATIVE

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- Resources needed to improve formative assessment: all options rated above 3.0 (tech support, item banks, best practices, professional development)
- Desired OPI/State Roles: greater support for dissemination and item banking (all over 3.0) than goal setting, reporting, and monitoring (all under 3.0)

# CONCLUSIONS

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- **Demographics:** large, demographically diverse sample; not necessarily representative
- **CRT Program:** moderate satisfaction; no consensus on next steps
- **Formative Assessment:** significant activity around the state; desire for more professional development and dissemination of best practices and items; little desire for formal state role (oversight and monitoring)

# NEXT STEPS

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- Discuss findings around the state
- Delve more deeply into reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction
- Develop policies to increase satisfaction from current moderate level
- Greater support for local formative assessment activities